

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PARIS NIACT IMMEDIATE
EUCOM VAIHIGEN GER NIACT IMMEDIATE (DELIVER IMMEDIATELY)

S E C R E T STATE 138361

NODIS
MILITARY HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOR AMB HARTMAN FROM MOOSE AND AARON

E.O. 11652:XGDS -3

TAGS: MOPS, FR, CG

SUBJECT: US SUPPORT FOR AFRICAN FORCE IN SHABA

1. AS YOU KNOW WE HAVE RESPONDED QUICKLY AND POSITIVELY TO THE FRENCH REQUEST THAT WE PROVIDE UP TO 30 AIRLIFT FLIGHTS TO TRANSPORT FRENCH TROOPS FROM ZAIRE AND IN THE PROCESS ALSO TO TRANSPORT THEIR REPLACEMENTS FROM MOROCCO AND OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES. INDEED EUCOM HAS BEEN ORDERED TO ARRANGE COORDINATION WITH FRENCH COUNTERPARTS TO DEVELOP THE PLAN FOR INSERTION OF AN AFRICAN FORCE AND RETROGRADE OF FRENCH TROOPS.

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2. HOWEVER, WE HAVE ONLY THE BARE OUTLINES OF WHAT THE FRENCH HAVE IN MIND AND HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED ANY REQUEST FROM OR, INDEED, HAD ANY CONTACT ON THIS SUBJECT WITH ANY OF THE AFRICANS REPORTED TO BE INVOLVED. SPECIFICALLY WE DON'T KNOW:

-- WHICH AFRICAN COUNTRIES WILL PARTICIPATE AND WITH HOW

MANY TROOPS;

-- THE PROPOSED COMMAND STRUCTURE OF THE AFRICAN FORCE, ITS CONCEPT OF OPERATION OR THE TIMING OF ITS INSERTION,

AS YOU CAN WELL IMAGINE, IF THIS OPERATION KICKS OFF UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WE WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO RESPOND TO DETAILED QUESTIONS FROM THE CONGRESS, OR THE PRESS.

3. WE HAVE HEARD, BUT INDIRECTLY, THAT THE FRENCH MAY BE WORKING UNDER SOME TIME CONSTRAINT -- AND WE WOULD APPRECIATE THAT. BUT UNLESS THERE IS AN OVERRIDING REASON WHY THE ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPERATION MUST BEGIN BEFORE JUNE 5, WE BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE PERSUASIVE REASONS TO HOLD OFF UNTIL THE PARIS MEETING.

-- EUCOM, WORKING WITH THE FRENCH AND OTHER MILITARY AUTHORITIES, COULD COORDINATE PLANS AND PROVIDE THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS RAISED ABOVE.

-- WE COULD USE THE INTERVENING TIME BEFORE JUNE 5 TO PREPARE CONGRESS AND, VERY IMPORTANTLY, TO BROADEN AFRICAN AND OTHER WESTERN SUPPORT FOR THE OPERATION.

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-- THE RESULTS OF THE JOINT MILITARY PLANNING COULD BE PRESENTED AT THE JUNE 5 MEETING WHERE, UPON REVIEW, THE OPERATION COULD BE ANNOUNCED IN A COORDINATED WAY.

4. YOU SHOULD GET TO FRANCOIS-PONCET, SINCE OUR REPLY WAS SENT TO HIM, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO PRESENT THE FOREGOING CONSIDERATIONS. IF THE FRENCH COULD AGREE TO OUR SUGGESTED SCENARIO, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE BEST. AS YOU TALK TO FRANCOIS-PONCET, OR WHOMEVER YOU DEEM APPROPRIATE, YOU SHOULD ALSO RAISE:

-- OUR NEED FOR REQUESTS FROM THE AFRICAN PARTICIPANTS IN THE FORCE. THE FRENCH MIGHT ARRANGE THIS.

-- WHAT UNDERSTANDINGS HAVE THE FRENCH REACHED WITH MOBUTU? WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT FUNDAMENTAL REFORMS ARE REQUIRED AND THAT THESE SHOULD BE THE QUID FOR WESTERN ASSISTANCE.

-- THE GENERAL NEED FOR MORE INFORMATION FROM THE FRENCH AND BETTER COORDINATION AMONGST THE WESTERN

ALLIES IN OUR DEALINGS WITH MOBUTU. WE ARE ALSO
CONCERNED THAT THE FRENCH BRING THE BELGIANS INTO
THE ACT.

5. WHILE WE DO NOT RPT NOT WISH TO PROVOKE REQUESTS, WE
ALSO DO NOT WISH TO BE SURPRISED LATER WITH EQUIPMENT SHOP-
PING LISTS FROM THE AFRICANS -- OR FOLLOW-ON REQUESTS FROM
THE FRENCH. TRY TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU CAN IN THIS REGARD
WITHOUT LEAVING US WIDE OPEN. VANCE

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